

Potomac Heritage Trail

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Potomac Heritage
National Scenic Trail



Fiscal Year 2005 Annual Report

1 October 2004 – 30 September 2005



Connecting People and Places

The Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail--one of twenty-three national historic and scenic trails in the National Trails System--is a partnership to develop and sustain a network of trails for non-motorized travel between the mouth of the Potomac River and the Allegheny Highlands. The following suggests the work of many Trail partners over the past year.

An Expanding Trail Network

The Potomac Heritage Trail network continued to develop with the completion of many notable projects, including:

- designation of the 22-mile Prince Georges County Potomac Heritage Trail On-Road Bicycling Route as a segment of the National Scenic Trail;
- restoration of the Monocacy Aqueduct, a feature on the C & O Canal Towpath;
- construction, by Potomac Heritage Trail Association volunteers, of a critical one-mile trail along the boundary of the Noman Cole Pollution Control Plant in southern Fairfax County;
- designation of the trail system in Green Ridge State Forest, connecting with the C&O Canal Towpath to create a 46-mile loop, was designated an National Recreation Trail; and
- completion of a 9-mile segment of the Allegheny Highlands Trail (Maryland), part of the Great Allegheny Passage, near Frostburg.

There are now six recognized segments of the Trail, totaling 458.5 miles, and the Trail is appearing in more local management plans. In the past year, the Trail has been included formally in management plans for Great Falls Park, U.S. Army Garrison Fort Belvoir, and Nanjemoy Natural Resource Management Area.

Applications requesting designation of five trails, listed below, are either in draft form or completed and waiting to be submitted:

- Alexandria Heritage Trail;
- a system of linear parks in Loudoun County;
- Potomac River Water Trail from Jennings Randolph Dam to the mouth;
- Fort Circle Parks Trail (FCPT) and a companion route in the District of Columbia; and
- Riverbend Park and Scott's Run Nature Preserve in northern Fairfax County.

Plans for Trail segments were also completed in Prince William County (between Woodbridge and Leesylvania State Park), and in southern Fairfax County. Staff of D.C. agencies and the National Park Service, National Capital Region, began development of the FCPT, a planned hiking segment of the Trail, and established a partnership with the Landscape Architecture Program, University of Maryland College Park, to develop a concept plan. And, to better understand the evolving network, staff of the National Capital Region Technical Services Division and Trail Office refined the quality of data in the Trail geographic information system and produced a revised set of maps.

Communications, Coordination & Partnerships

Activities over the past year included:

- the 8th Potomac Heritage Trail Annual Caucus, held at the National Conservation Training Center (followed by establishment of a list-serve by volunteer partners);
- distribution of an annual report and four Trail Office activity reports;
- execution of new cooperative agreements with the Northern Virginia Regional Commission and with BikeWalk Virginia; drafting a new agreement with the Potomac Conservancy; and an amendment to an agreement with Institute for International Tourism Studies, George Washington University;
- a cooperative project with American Hiking Society and the Institute for Conservation Leadership, supported with funds from the Challenge Cost-Share

Program, to consult with a range of Trail partners to establish a foundation for increased coordination among volunteer-based citizen groups;

- co-sponsorship of the Virginia Governor's Conference on Greenways, Trails and Blueways and the 2005 Potomac River Sojourn, and participation in the Prince William County Transportation Open House; and
- support for a summary by the Potomac Heritage Trail Association on the 10th National Historic and Scenic Trails Conference.

In addition, newsletters produced by the Allegheny Trail Alliance, C & O Canal Association and Potomac Heritage Trail Association described a wide range of Trail-related projects.

Project Assistance

With assistance from the Northern Virginia Regional Commission (NVRC) and Trail Office, public planners and land managers along the Potomac River in Virginia compiled a set of needs to complete the Trail and drafted a development and management plan; for more information, contact Douglas Pickford, NVRC, at pickford@novaregion.org.

More locally, consultations on plans, applications for designation, and partnership opportunities included the following agencies, organizations and programs:

- Allegheny Trail Alliance
- Chesapeake Floating Theatre
- D.C. Dept. of Parks and Recreation
- D.C. Dept. of Transportation
- Eastern States Office, Bureau of Land Management
- Federal Highways Administration
- Greater Washington National Parks Fund

- Green Ridge State Forest, Md. DNR
- Greenways and Water Trails, Md. DNR
- Loudoun County Dept. of Parks, Recreation and Community Services
- National Capital Planning Commission
- Northern Neck Planning District Commission
- Northern Neck Tourism Council
- Northern Virginia Regional Commission
- NPS Rivers, Trails & Conservation Assistance
- Potomac Heritage Trail Association
- Prince Georges County Dept. of Planning
- Prince William County Dept. of Transportation
- Prince William County Park Authority
- Rappahannock Area Development Commission
- Rivers of Steel Heritage Area
- Stafford County Dept. of Economic Development
- Univ. of Maryland College Park Landscape Architecture Program

For more information on specific projects, send your request to don_briggs@nps.gov.

Interpretation and Education

Partnerships are essential to reveal the significance of the Trail corridor, as indicated by the following:

- With project management and design by staff at the NPS Harpers Ferry Center, the NPS brochure on the Trail now features a new map, providing a clear explanation of the Trail.
- American Hiking Society, with support from the Trail Office, published three issues of *Potomac Trace*, a journal to help explain the significance of the Trail project.
- *A Hiker's Guide to the Potomac Heritage Trail*, a project of American Hiking Society, Great Allegheny Press and the Trail Office, took two more steps toward publication in hard copy, planned for May 2006.

Other projects included:

- review of a "graphic identity toolkit" for use by Trail partners;
- co-sponsoring a Conservation Associate, Student Conservation Association, to research opportunities for interpretive programs, linked to the Trail corridor, at Point State Park in Pittsburgh;
- co-sponsoring a Potomac "events calendar" (see www.potomacevents.org);
- coordinating revisions to *Tidewater Potomac Heritage Bicycle Route*, published by Adventure Cycling Association; and
- development, with the expertise of the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay and the Accokeek Foundation, of foundation materials for formal lesson plans associated with Trail segments.

Financial Highlights

Federal funding for Trail administration complements extensive investments by individual volunteers; non-profit organizations; local, regional and state agencies; and other federal partners.

Hours donated to Trail projects: 2776 (estimate)

Volunteer-in-the-Park Program: \$1,100

Parks as Classrooms Program \$4,200

Challenge Cost-Share Program: \$ 30,000

Operation of the National Park System (ONPS):

- Administration \$132,364
- Project Assistance \$ 94,484
- Printing \$ 10,305
- Miscellaneous \$ 9,947

ONPS Total: \$247,100

More Information

Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail Office
National Park Service
Post Office Box B
Harpers Ferry, West Virginia 25425

www.nps.gov/pohe

Trail Administrator:

Donald E. Briggs, Superintendent
don_briggs@nps.gov
304.535.4016

Office of Communications
National Capital Region
National Park Service
1100 Ohio Drive SW
Washington, D.C. 20242

<http://www.nps.gov/ncro>

202-619-7222